

On the Table

no. 1



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We are *On the Table*, McGill University's 100% student-run culinary magazine. With Montréal as our home base, we are highly curious about the food scene across our campus and city. Mainly, though, we just have a lot of fun talking generally about food and the beverages that go with it—their flavours, processes, histories, politics, and pleasures.

Our team is made up of about 20 undergraduate students from nearly every department, meaning that the work we put out is quite varied and, sometimes, even educational. Together, our main desire is simply to share the many ways we eat and drink, student-to-student.

We launched our website, onthetablemag.com, on October 1st of this year. Online, you'll notice that we've divided our articles into three categories: At Home, On the Town, and In the Know. At Home stands for anything domestic, such as recipes and personal stories. On the Town covers content about Montréal or Québec. In the Know catches more informative material, like food science and food history. As you read this issue (graciously funded by SSMU), you can imagine each of these pieces as falling into one or more of these classifications.

We hope that our magazine encourages you to get curious about the physical, mental, and emotional forces of food. If you are interested in joining, you can send us a message on Facebook or Instagram, @onthetablemag.

Issue no. 1 is the first invitation we extend to you to gather *chez nous*, where there's always something hot on the table waiting to be discussed and devoured in good company.

Hi there reader,

First of all, thank you for picking this magazine up. A lot of people put a lot of thought and energy into this, our first ever print issue, with someone like you in mind.

I started working on the concept of *On the Table* this past summer, although I didn't know it would be called that at the time, let alone that people would actually be interested in joining it. All I knew was that I didn't want it to be too snobby, or too "foodie," or too restrictive. Mostly, I just thought it would be really fun to get together every week or so with a group of people who are open to new ideas about food and drink (this part has proved to be completely true). I also found it pretty strange that McGill didn't already have any culinary publication, seeing as we live in Montréal, which I once heard an important voice in food call "the most exciting city in North America for food."

I posted a "Calling All Creatives" type of post anywhere on Facebook where I thought McGill students might see it and was surprised by the number of people who responded. Of every person I interviewed, I asked their favorite food memory, which probably put them on the spot, but which was the most important question to me. It allowed me to learn something a little personal about each interviewee, as well as listen to what matters most to them about food.

That's still the primary motivator of *On the Table*, listening to what makes food matter to other people. The joy of the magazine form is that it transforms the act of listening into the act of imagining, creating, and exchanging, at the very least.

In this issue, for example, you'll find out that we care about food for its murderous properties, its repercussions for moustached gentlemen, its sustainable business owners, its holiday connotations, and more. While this is not officially a holiday issue, there's a lot of cozy content that you may appreciate consuming with one of the warming recipes contained within these pages.

Consider this our gift to you, a bright celebration of food and drink at the end of another year of heaviness.

Sincerely,

Evelyne Eng

Editor-in-Chief



Letter
from
the
Editor



LOIS LOIS

A SUPERHERO OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY
BY BRIDGET O'BRIEN



David Côté and Julie Poitras-Saulnier, LOOP Mission co-founders. (All photos provided by LOOP Mission.)



Canadians have too much food on their plates, and much of that food is wasted. Approximately 60% of food produced in Canada is thrown away, and 32% of that food is edible, according to Second Harvest Food Rescue. Fortunately, one Montreal-based company has come to the rescue, producing products out of edible food waste, while influencing other companies to do the same.

Founded in 2016 by Julie Poitras-Saulnier and David Côté, LOOP Mission reduces food waste by rescuing the outcasts of the food industry. Outcasts are leftover produce that result from a higher yield than farmers anticipate; an excess of products that grocery stores order; waste from food production companies; or consumers who don't want to purchase imperfect, yet edible, produce.

Each week, LOOP Mission receives multiple phone calls from farmers, citizens, and businesses with waste to donate. They do not accept free waste, however; instead, they buy it, thereby creating a circular economy model—in other words, a loop. Accepting food waste as a non-profit organization versus buying it as a profitable company was a decision Poitras-Saulnier and Côté had to make early on in the founding of LOOP Mission.

“[Poitras-Saulnier and Côté] thought that if they're going to make a difference [in the food industry], and if the circular economy model is something people will want to replicate, they have no choice but to do it profitably,” Pascale Larouche, LOOP Mission's public relations specialist, stated. “That way, they show there is value in food waste.”

Unfortunately, LOOP Mission cannot say yes to buying everyone's food waste. Larouche explained that waste they are offered may not align with LOOP Mission's current products, which mainly consist of fruity beers, juices, and smoothies. An alternative, less common reason is that the quantity of waste people have to give is not enough. Ultimately, Larouche clarified, “The main reason we say no is because people call us too often and we don't have the capacity to accept everything.”

The products LOOP Mission is able to buy are essential ingredients in the wide array of goods they sell: Day-old bread is used to brew low-percentage sour beer, perfectly-imperfect-produce are used to make cold-pressed juices and smoothies, potato skins from a potato chip factory are used to distill lime & ginger gin, plant hydrosols leftover from essential oil manufacturing are used to ferment refreshing probiotic sodas, and rejected sunflower oil from a vegan fast food chain is used to create gentle soaps.

Similarly to the companies they purchase from, LOOP Mission produces waste themselves, like pulp from juices. To continue the sustainability loop, they sell their food waste to a local dog treat company and also work with a company that feeds insects residual pulp to produce insect powders.

In addition to selling their waste, LOOP Mission also has many ideas for using it themselves. Larouche revealed that





LOOP Mission juices: Big Bang (left) and Loco Local (right).



A colourful collection of LOOP beverages.

current projects in the works include developing a pizza crust, healthy cookies, and even packaging material for their products.

LOOP Mission products can be found all over Canada and are beginning to be sold in the United States as well. Although the items found in each location are the same, the ingredients used to make them are from different places. Products sold in Ontario use food waste local to Ontario, while those sold in Quebec use food waste local to Quebec. This further reduces LOOP Mission's environmental footprint by cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions that are released during transportation.

Products may also be packaged in various materials, depending on which ones are recycled in each city where LOOP Mission distributes its products. "In Ontario, aluminum cans may be recycled better than in Quebec, so making beers in aluminum cans with the Toronto partner makes a lot of sense for the environment," Larouche elucidated. "But this wouldn't necessarily be the right choice for a Quebec product."

Customers can stay up-to-date on LOOP Mission's products by following their Instagram page, @loopmission. Here, they create small vlog-style videos called "Behind the Loop," through which they work to establish a form of transparency between customers and the food industry.

"The goal [of 'Behind The Loop'] was to be as authentic as we can. We are so passionate about what we do, it is such a cool model to see, and we want to influence people to do the same," Larouche said. "There are actually so many things that farmers, distributors, and grocery stores are doing that people don't know about. So ['Behind The Loop' is a way to] unveil the behind-the-scenes of the food industry in every way, shape, and form, while getting people interested in the mission of what we do."

A recent example in these vlogs highlights the use of LOOP Mission's newest ingredient, the daikon radish. Each year, a Quebec farm uses daikons to preserve their soil in the off-season of growing romaine lettuce and celery (which LOOP Mission uses in their green juices). However, the daikons are not harvested and end up costing the farm money to remove them. In "Behind the Loop," LOOP Mission showed the process of creating a new product from these daikons, one that is more funky in flavour, sauerkraut.

LOOP Mission continues to exist as a recycling centre for food waste, producing delicious and nutritious products out of food which would otherwise be thrown away. In addition to their contribution to Canadian food waste reduction, LOOP Mission's online transparency and ecologically conscientious role in the food industry serve as models for other companies to do the same.

With LOOP Mission's growing influence, perhaps in the future, more companies and grocery stores will view otherwise overlooked produce not only as profit, but as a strategy to mitigate Canada's preventable food waste crisis.

LOOP Mission products can be purchased at practically any grocery store in Montreal, or online at loopmission.com, where you can customize a LOOP Box for delivery.

Alimentary Deaths in the Ancien Regime

by Agathe Nolla

Illustrations by Kelly Xiang

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, a French historian of the Ancien Régime, identifies 16 different famines during the 17th and 18th centuries in France, with between 500,000 and 1.3 million deaths occurring in each. Similarly, inadequate hygiene and sanitation regarding food and drinks led to several waves of death, illness, and food poisoning throughout those times. Years of historical, sociological, and anthropological research are dedicated to these topics. I, however, would like to tell you about how food took the lives of three characters of the 17th and 18th centuries in different ways.



Let us start with François Vatel (1631-1671), a French and Swiss royal cook for King Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715). Around his 40s, Vatel was given the honour of organizing celebrations and feasts for the royal court at two different castles, Vaux-le-Vicomte and Chantilly. He is today exceptionally remembered, unlike other royal cooks, for his tragic and rather dramatic death.

On April 23rd of 1671, the entire Court of Louis XIV came to celebrate the end of La Fronde, the war between the king and his nobility, for three days and nights at the Château de Chantilly. The next day, the king and the guests were expected to eat fish for Lent. Early in the morning of that day, Vatel awaited the arrival of the fish delivery to begin

preparations for dinner. However, it did not arrive in time. He allegedly waited another four hours before panicking and claiming that he would lose his reputation and honour to this incident. It has been said that eventually he ran to his room and stabbed himself three times in the stomach, just when his long-awaited fish was arriving.

At the time, he was described as a hero by writers such as Madame de Sévigné and was mourned by the entire court, including the king. His story informs historians of the pressure that working for the monarch placed on cooks and other royal servants. For instance, they were asked to return their wage to the host if the order did not make it or if there was not enough food for all the guests.

Marie-Marguerite Monvoisin (1658–c.1681) belongs to the noble world of 1680, in which an epidemic of murders by poisoning had broken out. In fateful irony, her death was not caused by the poison itself. At a time when the nobility was losing important people to poisonings, accusations were being thrown around, especially against women. They were assumed to be witches responsible for the poisoning.

Madame Monvoisin's mother, called La Voisin, was implicated in the poison and toxin trade and hence was arrested for poisoning and burned alive on February 28th of 1680. Monvoisin testified against her own mother, and even after La Voisin's execution, she continued to inform the investigators about her mother's accomplices. She specifically pointed out the frequency at which her mother would meet Mademoiselle des Oeillets, the lady in waiting

of the king's mistress, Madame de Montespan. Monvoisin worried that they were trying to make the king fall in love with Madame de Montespan using witchcraft—in other words, trying to assassinate the queen by poisoning her meal. This is not a precipitous plot, for Montespan knew well that the only chance at becoming the king's wife was to eliminate his current one.

When this story arose, Louis XIV decided to shut down the famous *Affaires des Poisons*, which had existed for over five years, along with all the judicial institutions and offices created with it. In that way, he could protect his mistress, Madame de Montespan, from justice. As for Monvoisin, she was incarcerated at the age of 23 and spent the last moments of her life in jail.



Nicolas de Condorcet (1743-1793) was a French thinker of the mid-18th century. He is especially famous for his work as a mathematician and engineer, and he participated in several construction projects, both under the monarchy and during the Revolution. In the field of math, he was a leading scholar in probabilities and statistics in Europe at the time. An eloquent and well-spoken man, he frequented the salons of the 18th century, where several thinkers met to discuss literature, theater, arts, and increasingly, politics.

As the Ancien Régime collapsed in 1789, Condorcet sided with the Girondins, a revolutionary party in Paris, and was elected to the legislative assembly in 1791. On January 19th of 1793, Condorcet voted against the decapitation of the king, as did a large minority of the assembly. The king was executed two days later. Condorcet had brought suspicion

upon himself. A few months later, he voted against the proposal of the new constitution. This was enough to prosecute him for treason. He was able to escape and spent nine months hiding from judicial persecution in a friend's basement in Paris, before leaving for the southwest of France. Early on in his journey, he made a stop in Clamart at a tavern and ordered an omelet.

"How many eggs?" asked the cook. "Twelve!" said Condorcet, hangry. "Twelve?!" The cook was in disbelief. This man could only be a fleeing aristocrat. He called the gendarmerie, who recognized Condorcet and arrested him. Although he was supposed to be executed by guillotine, Condorcet died in his prison cell two days after his arrest, in 1793.



Growing up in France, I've heard these tales several times. Twisted and twisted again, whether they were narrated by my dad or by a history magazine for kids, the details of the stories always differed. I sincerely wish I could offer you the true stories of the deaths of Vatel, Condorcet, or Monvoisin. As a history student, however, I have come to terms with it: I cannot tell you the truth.

On the Table's Pantry Picks

by Sophie Yap

Illustrations by James Collier



Dijon Mustard (Holly Ferron, Writer)
Mustard reminds me of kids' birthday parties and summer cookouts. I use it for anything ketchup can and cannot do.



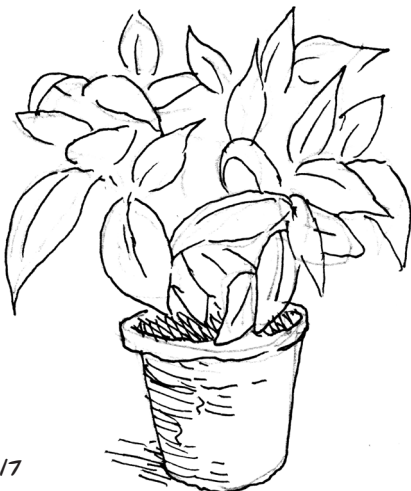
Bananas (Alice Wu, Writer)
These are a fresh ingredient but serve different purposes in different stages of ripeness. I use them in oatmeal, oat and banana cookies, frozen in smoothies, and sliced on toast. They're also convenient (no need for washing and chopping) and portable!

Basil (Agathe Nolla, Writer)

I would simply buy a basil plant and put it in my kitchen so that it'll smell good (it always makes me hungry as well). Besides pizza and pesto, you can use basil leaves as toppings for soup, salad, and even ice cream. It's one of those herbs that's neither tasteless nor overwhelming.



Dried Pasta (Lysette Umwali, Photographer)
I LOVE pasta, so I always have these on hand to make pasta dishes and soups. Growing up, one of my favourite meals was spaghetti with meat ragù. I usually go for rigatoni from Lancia.



Marmite (Léa Bourget, Photographer)

The haters will be hating, but as I am a person of Irish and English descent, this brings back so many good memories and feelings: Christmas parties at my families', rainy Sunday brunches with my parents and my cat, midnight snacks...it just means too much to me. It's best on freshly toasted bread with butter (vegan, for me). It can also be used as broth in various recipes, and heals homesickness.



If you're any student, especially one off the hook from dorm living, at-home cooking has come to consume you. And much of home cooking does not come from labouring over the stove for elaborate meals, making multiple plates, or even bothering with dishes. It's in those moments that Lao Gan Ma's Chili Oil with Black Bean has made a name for itself as a staple item and star of my condiment shelf. It's savoury and mild, with Sichuan pepper that makes your tongue tingle and nuggets of crunchy beans that add nuttiness to stir fries. I always come back to this product because it never fails to add not just spice, but much needed flavour and texture. By pairing this with Lee Kum Kee's Black Bean Garlic Sauce, there's zero thought required to come up with other seasonings—omit the salt and pepper, and even the soy sauce.

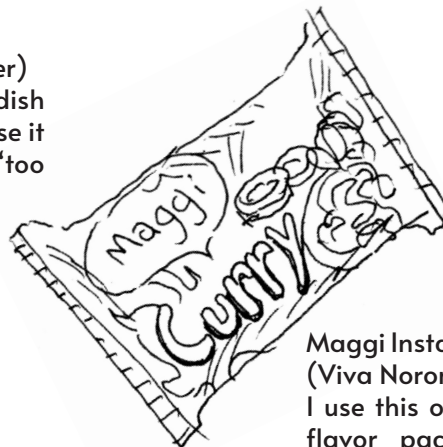
Stir fries with this combination of sauces have thus come to be the taste of the last two and a half years, in times of fatigue and inventiveness. I add about a teaspoon of each after frying up a mix of the limp vegetables in

my refrigerator drawer. I'm a creature of habit, and as someone who has grown up eating rice most nights of my life, I will always place this scrumptious mix of revived stir fry on a bed of steamy white rice. Yet my thoughts about how to integrate these jars of unctuous orange crunch and funky-smelling bean sauce into every meal are also endless: add this on top of a yogurt sauce, slather it over your roasted veggies, or dollop it on top of a sunny-side up or soft boiled egg (strictly 6.5 minute cooking time!) lain on a piece of well-buttered sourdough toast. As I think of the myriad ways to convince my friends and family to also stock their pantry with these, my jar of chili oil has made a home for itself in its oily, orange circle on my refrigerator shelf. It remains the taste of university for me.

A good pantry item is not only a cheat for more flavour and sentimentality, but a glance into what others reach for in times of comfort, quick bites, and late nights. These are the pantry items that *On the Table* staffers continually come back to and some ideas as to how you could use them.

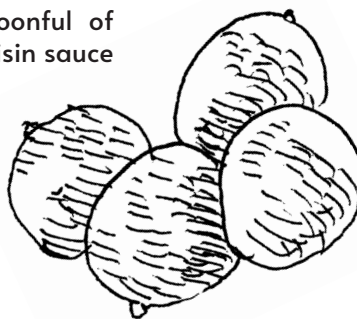


Italian Spice Mix (Maude Laroche, Writer)
It's an easy way to make basically any dish a success, although I especially like to use it on potatoes. It adds a flavor that isn't "too much."



Maggi Instant Noodles, Curry Flavor (Viva Noronha, Writer)
I use this on a lazy day! The spicy flavor packet is so nostalgic—since this particular flavor is only available in the UAE, the country I grew up in, it reminds me of back home.

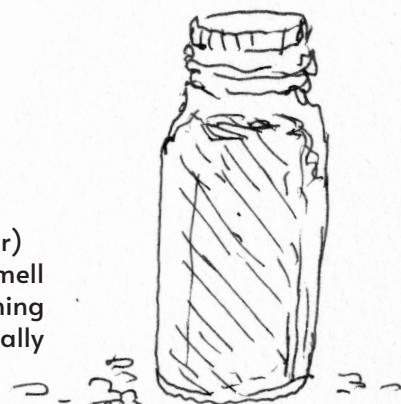
Lime Juice (Bavisha Thurairajah, Writer)
I use this in anything savoury that needs a little freshness and brightness, like salad dressing, chicken curry, and baked salmon. Adding it to ramen with a spoonful of peanut butter and a drizzle of hoisin sauce is so good.



Fish Sauce (Evelyne Eng, Editor-in-chief)
While fish sauce adds depth to pretty much any dish, I actually mainly use it in tomato sauce for pasta. Even when I add a good quantity of anchovies and parmesan, I find that the dish misses a bit of umami without the super-smelly fish sauce. It's way cheaper than buying a jar of anchovies, and I find it stays preserved much longer too.



Cinnamon (Anna Mackay, Editor)
This is the most comforting smell in the world. It works in everything that is remotely sweet, especially cinnamon toast!





A BITTERSWEET WORLD

BY EVELYNE ENG

Photographs by Léa Bourget

Within the multiverse, there is possibly an infinite number of universes. Within our universe, there is Earth. Within Earth, there is an infinite number of human-made universes. One of those is the cocktailverse. Within the cocktailverse, there is Planet Bitter. When beings of Bitter meet beings of, say, Planets Spirit and Syrup, they produce an infinite number of flavours, aromas, textures, colours, and emotions that we humans drink in the form of cocktails.

Planet Bitter, whose beings are called bitters, has yet to be explored to the same extent as Spirit and Syrup. In Montreal, Jean-Michel Sebastien is one of the leaders of this niche expedition. Jean is not a bartender by trade, but he has hoards of knowledge on the cocktailverse. His Little Italy store, Alambika, resembles a potions shop, but the tiny glass bottles that line its meticulous shelves are filled with liquids for mixing craft cocktails. Alambika also sells glassware, barware, Japanese knives, male grooming products, and other little luxuries, but the magnetic centre of the shop pulls one towards those tiny glass bottles. Two whole racks of them are filled with bitters.

By Jean's definition, "A bitter is a tincture (anything, typically a plant extract, that has been dissolved in a solvent, typically alcohol) macerated with herbs, flowers, peels, nuts, fruits, and spices used to flavour and balance out the sweetness in a cocktail. What makes a bitter different from a tincture is that bitters always have a bittering agent in it, such as gentian root."



The history of bitters is a bit hazy. Their first uses were medicinal; Angostura, for example, was created for Venezuelan soldiers battling malaria in the early 1800s, according to *Smithsonian Magazine*. This original purpose is still fairly common in certain areas of the world, such as Sweden, but they've been mainly consumed as cocktail add-ins since at least the 1800s due to their widespread availability. Just as alcohol 'disappeared' during Prohibition, however, bitters vanished too. Jean claimed that they even lost quite a bit of their medicinal value in this period, as rising scientific discoveries dismissed them as snake oil. For quite some time, bitters were available in Trinidad and Tobago, for instance, but unavailable in Canada. Zoom forward to 2021, where it seems "there are more bitter companies than people on Earth." It's still unclear exactly why bitters are undergoing a "huge revival"—some attribute it to a mixologist named Gary Regan—but no matter the reason, we should all feel pretty fortunate to witness the day.

With such an enticing history, it is surprising that most avid cocktail fans are hesitant to use bitters, and that when they do, they use only the most common ones with a light hand. This is partly owing to the price of bitters, which can run quite high. When one considers that most bitters can last almost indefinitely without losing much but subtle notes, however, this doesn't seem an adequate explanation. According to Jean, the deeper cause is the "self-fulfilling prophecy issue of bitters," in which bitters are excluded from recipes to make them seem more accessible to readers, resulting in the popular, false belief that bitters are simply unnecessary. Quite the opposite is true.

"To have bitters is to have a rack of spices in your kitchen," Jean explained. "Cooking with no bitters is like cooking without salt or spice. When you don't use bitters, you don't realize it. When you start using them, it's like an aha moment: What have I been doing all my life?! Usually people put less than more, which is a bad thing—you need to taste them (although this depends on the potency of the individual bitter)."

Like starting to use spices, starting to use bitters is often a trial-and-error process and depends a lot on personal preference. Jean recommends starting with "salt and pepper," or a good orange bitter and a good aromatic bitter. If that seems too alien to you, consider that the classic martini called for orange bitters, until, in Jean's history book, the 80s hit and the original version was blown apart. Or, if that's not otherworldly enough for you, Jean recommends picking up a starter kit, such as the 6-pack by Bittercube, and playing around.

This is how Jean navigates Planet Bitter: He begins by concocting a basic cocktail he enjoys. Next, he pours it into five or six little glasses, and adds a different bitter to each. Finally, he tastes, and is either nauseous, unaltered, or transported to an alternate dimension.

For the more culinary-minded, one can also start by thinking about the flavour profile of a beloved dish. How about



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DASHFIRE
BITTERS

BAY LEAF
BITTERS

INGREDIENTS:

ALCOHOL/ALCOOL, BAY LEAF/
FEUILLE DE LAURIER, WATER/EAU,
ANGELICA ROOT/RACINE D'ANGÉLIQUE

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THE
JAPANESE
BITTERS

Product of Japan



tagine? Rye whiskey, saffron syrup, and apricot bitters. Autumn dessert? Calvados, falernum, and toasted pecan bitters (Miracle Mile makes a bestselling one).

One can, in fact, cook with bitters. Some bitters are more mellow for this purpose, although Jean is slightly against these, as their softness can get lost in a cocktail. Most people, like himself, do not cook often with bitters, so they ultimately go to waste (Jean also concedes that there are some wonderfully delicate bitters on the market). When Jean does cook with bitters, he reaches for bold Angostura, one of the most popular bitters around and a common ingredient in certain Caribbean cuisines. Jean slathers onions in the “Caribbean worcestershire” and sautées them for burgers. He also whips up the occasional cream, using a bitter as one would vanilla extract, as the two are almost “exactly the same concept,” being tinctures. A colleague of Jean briefly ran a pandemic business selling cocktail-flavoured cookies and used bitters in those. Infinite possibilities, here on Planet Bitter.

If ever one gets disoriented in this dizzying world, they can always consult the employees at Alambika, who could be so rightfully pretentious if they wanted to be, but are instead incredibly grounded and helpful. Mirroring the wall of tiny glass bottles is another, nearly identical wall from which customers can sample any facet of the cocktailverse. Among the many bitters I tasted, the star was Ms. Better Bitter’s Kiwi-Sumac, which Jean has nicknamed his “secret weapon” with reason—it erupts in the mouth like a liquid puff of exuberant tang. Another triumph, Amer Kebek’s Champignons Sauvages, beckons forth the “mapley” side of mushrooms that the Quebecois company’s female founder forages herself and transforms into bitters at Distillerie de la Chaufferie, in Granby. Another Quebec-made bitter by Sombre et Amer, Saecularis, is exactly as Jean describes it: “my 2-in-1 shampoo and conditioner,” that is, a highly versatile blend between aromatic and orange bitters.

In contrast to syrup companies, bitter companies are rare in Quebec, as strict liquor laws tend to make production extraordinarily complicated and expensive. It is, therefore, unavoidable that Alambika carries such a small selection of Quebecois bitters, but it does not signify a lack of attention to artisanship and sustainability on Jean’s behalf. Back home, Jean has a “cemetery of bitters,” the result of hundreds of companies from near and far who send him their bitters to try, and hopefully, sell. From this graveyard, Jean selects one, perhaps two, bitters per year to grace the holy shelves of his shop.

For many of these bitter brands, Jean also serves as the distributor for all of Canada. His highly selective process entails thinking about whether the brands source their ingredients locally, have original flavours, and demonstrate impressive branding skills. If a bitter makes it into Jean’s repertoire, it is something ethereal. Before the pandemic, Jean discovered Japan’s first house of bitters, The Japanese Bitters, which make “umami bombs.” The Umami flavour is like dashi, while Sakura Cherry Blossom is akin to salted flowers. Jean has to pay premium prices to have them shipped in, but what can he say besides, “Fuck, they’re amazing.”

What else can one say after having ventured onto Planet Bitter? There ought to be an anthropologist up here, a botanist, a chemist, a professor, gathering and researching and instructing others on bitters. Then again, the intimacy and abundance of the planet is something worth guarding. The people that choose to settle here, or at least the ones who have a home in Jean’s shop, are doing so through sustainable, mindful practices that work to ensure that new explorers, like myself, and maybe you, can experience the wonders of this world.

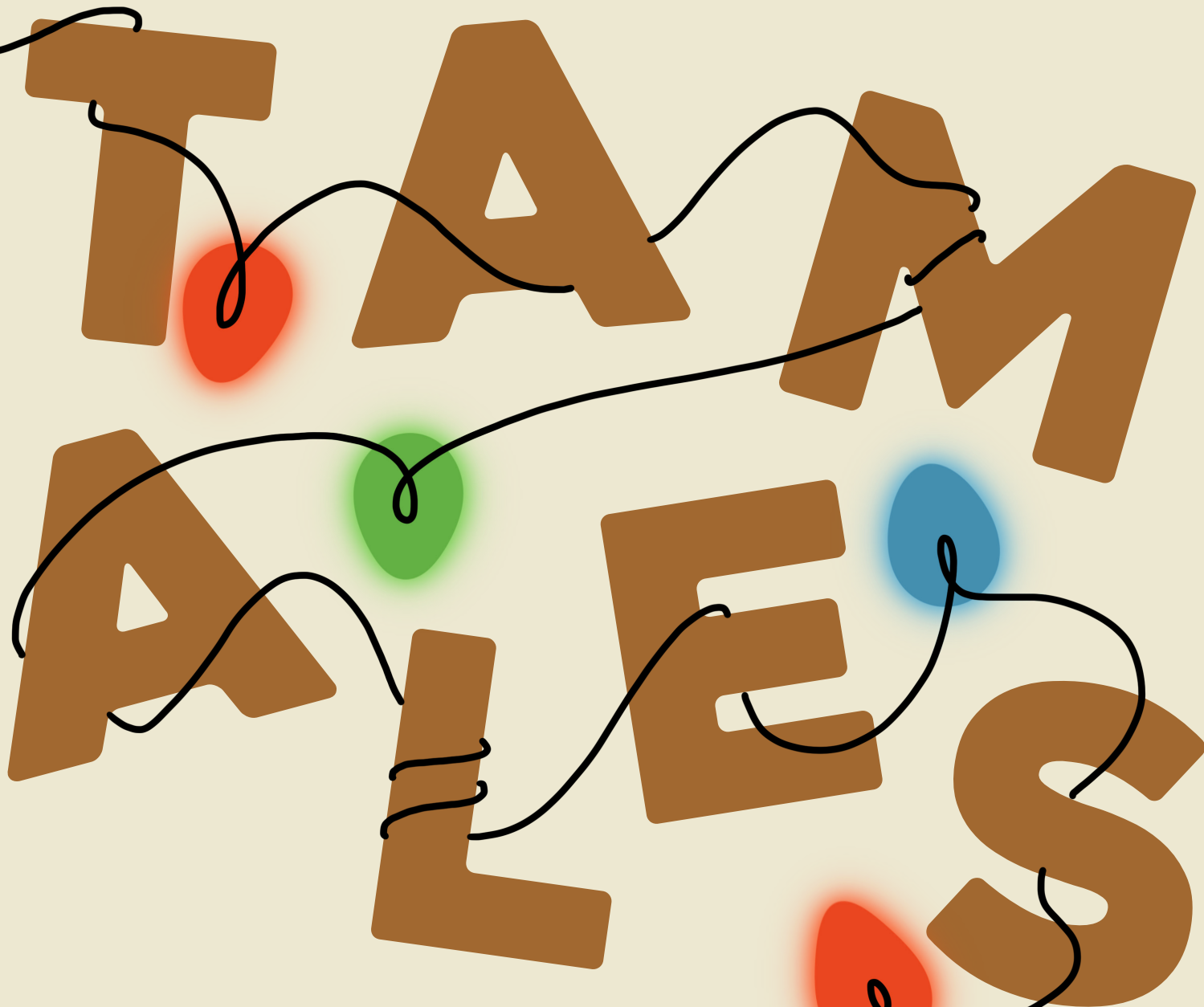
Alambika is located on 6484 St Laurent Blvd. Keep an eye out for updates on Alkademie next door, a multidisciplinary space for all things alcohol.



1. Hold your daughter close and gently push her dark braids back. Then, take out a large bowl. Tell her to mix sugar, salt, and butter until you can't tell where one ends and the other begins.
2. Add eggs and vanilla. Tell Kat to keep mixing and watch golden ribbons fall off the wooden spoon. You will see them and remember that it is your birthday. You are 43 today.
3. Sift flour and baking soda. Watch how the white specks fall like snow and say that Kat, you too can be a snow fairy. She'll start to feel scared of burying the town below in a snowstorm. Smile. She is 6.
4. Bring out the bittersweet chocolate chips, and tell Kat to try 1...or 5. Scatter the rest into the bowl.
5. Chill the dough for at least 30 minutes, and preheat the oven to 180°C. 180, you'll think, is a bad number. One that flashed on your glucometer the last time you indulged.
6. Help Kat scoop the dough onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. She'll laugh and say that it's like cookie dough ice cream. Oh ho, but don't eat these yet, you'll reply. Repeat the same words to yourself, omitting the word "yet."
7. Bake for 12-15 minutes. Before her excitement cools, your daughter will look at you intently. She'll wonder, why won't Daddy try a cookie? Grin widely and tell her—show her!—that you have bad teeth and you really shouldn't.
8. Listen as she asks if, just once for your birthday, you could brush your teeth *really well*. With mint toothpaste.
9. Remember the recipe you know too well: 30 grams of carbohydrates and 3 units of insulin yields one night of burning shame. It means tugging at your belly folds and swallowing salty tears. All this is best consumed alone, so simply tell her that you can't. You just can't.
10. But then tell Kat to help herself to seconds, thirds. Tell her it is alright. Keep telling her when she doesn't believe you.
11. Watch as her face falls. Feel your stomach knot, and look again at the sweetness you made.
12. Remember that you are 43 today, and she is 6. Later, you will try to recreate this moment. You will try to measure out everything you said, to count the number of belly laughs and seconds of silence. You will not know how.
13. So now, take a deep breath and the chocolate chip cookie Kat hands you. Savour it.

Kat and Dad's Cookie Recipe

by Alice Wu



TAMALE'S

The title 'TAMALE'S' is rendered in large, bold, brown, slightly irregular capital letters. A black string with five colored circular lights (red, green, blue, red, red) is draped across the letters. The string starts at the top left, loops around the first 'T', passes between the 'A' and 'M' of the first 'TAM', loops around the green light, passes between the 'L' and 'E' of 'MALE', loops around the blue light, passes between the 'S' and the second 'L', loops around the second red light, and ends at the bottom right.


ON THE GUATEMALAN
CHRISTMAS TABLE

BY BERY MOHAMMEDIYAN

I write this memory listening to “Amor Eterno,” sung by Rocio Durcal, to really get to my emotions, to trigger more details in my memory, and of course to be extra dramatic. I cannot remember the first time I ate a tamale, but I do remember always loving them. The only person who could make them for my family was my grandmother. During Christmas time, we would wait for my grandmother and her black cooler full of tamales. She made the best ones. I remember how well she would wrap them. She made them with a lot of love and care because the opinions and pleasure of others were always important to her. We would all gather up and eat her tamales. I cherish these moments because it was a moment where we were all together and happy.

When I was a child, she would help me unwrap my tamale. She would slowly remove the aluminum paper and the *platano* leaf. The tamale would slide off the leaf onto my plate. The smell was very unique and delicious. I can recognize that scent anywhere. The chicken mixed with the spices in the broth give it a distinctive aroma. The smell always makes me very nostalgic, probably because the olfactory bulb has a direct link to the hippocampus, or maybe because I miss those times. Who knows?

In Latin America there is a great variety of tamales. They have been around for generations and are often eaten during holidays such as Christmas. My great-grandmother used to eat them, and her grandmother used to eat them too. This nutritional dish is great for sustaining people, and its many variations allow it to be accessible to everyone. Almost every Latin country has its own kind of tamale; however, my emphasis will be on the tamales from my hometown, Amberes, Guatemala.



The tamale I have seen the most in Amberes is the *tamale de gallina*. *Gallina* (hen) is quite expensive in Amberes, so some people also use *marrano* (pork) or no meat at all to make their tamales. I asked my cousin to ask *tia Lola*, my aunt, how she does her *tamales de gallina* because those are the ones my grandmother used to bring us. For these, corn flour is mixed with water and salt to make a mixture called *masa*. Then, a broth is prepared that contains chicken, tomato sauce, onions, hot pepper, *ajonjoli* (sesame), *miltomate* (tomatillo), *chile guaque* (a type of red pepper from Guatemala), and *pasa pepitoria* (ground pumpkin seeds).

Often people who make tamales keep their chickens and hens in their house. My family keeps theirs in the backyard. Around the 23rd and 24th of December every year, I recall my grandmother asking my cousins and I to run around the house to catch a hen. I was scared to grab one, and I kept screaming, which my cousins thought was hilarious because it seemed like the hen was chasing me.

The hen is used as such: When the broth is ready, a rectangle of *masa* is made, a piece of boiled hen is put in the middle, and broth is poured on the tamale. Finally, a long piece of red pepper and one green olive is added in the middle. All of this is wrapped in a *platano* leaf, and then in aluminum foil. After being wrapped, the tamale is boiled until it is hard enough to hold its shape.

Tamales are served with a piece of lemon and Guatemala's most popular hot sauce, *Picamas*. They are often shared among family, friends or the entire village—it depends on the occasion. For Christmas and New Year's Eve, tamales are mainly shared with family and close friends. Some people will make their own tamales, or buy them from someone else.

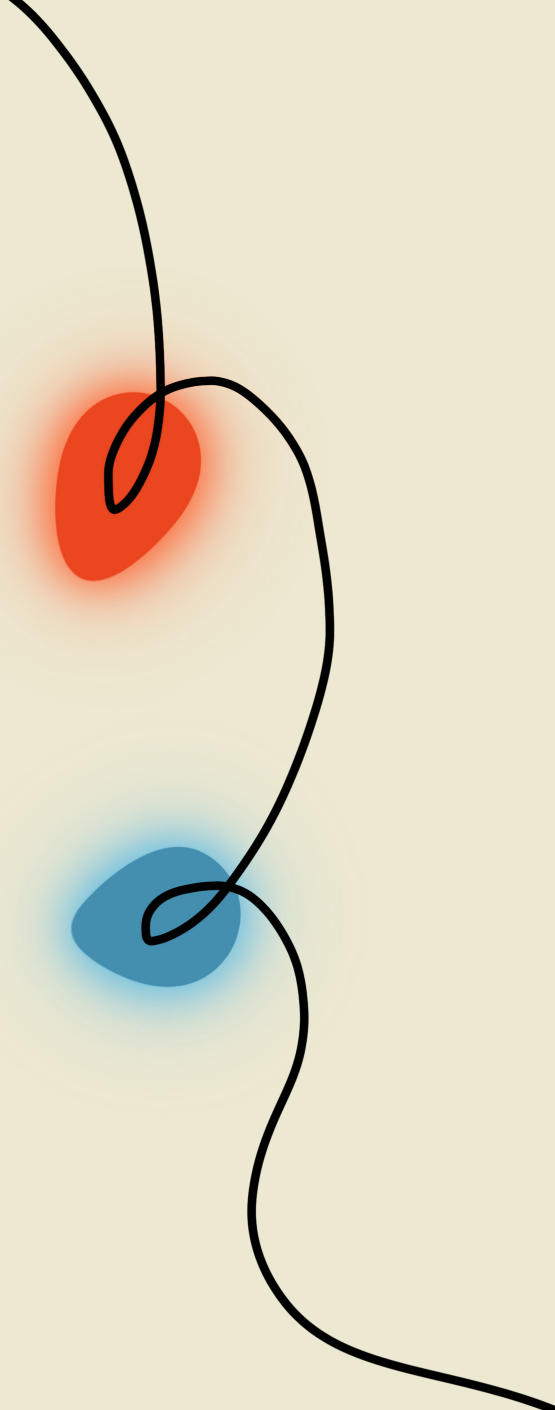
Reciprocity plays a primordial role in Amberes because it mixes people from every social class together, while also maintaining their social status. Higher class individuals share their wealth, demonstrating that they are both highly moral and affluent. For special occasions, wealthier people are expected to buy tamales for others, otherwise people will speculate about their economic situation and their values. Even within my family, my mother and grandmother were expected to either buy tamales when they would

visit Guatemala or send money there. If they would have decided to give less or nothing, my family members would have started to talk about my mother's and grandmother's degrading morality. My family would have felt like the wealth of my mother and grandmother had disconnected them from their home.

It is important for a family to give tamales to those who visit them because it communicates their ability to thank and appreciate the time taken by their visitors. Failing to do so would suggest that my mother and grandmother do not value the enthusiasm of those who celebrate with our family. As a result, they would be looked down upon by their community. The consequences of failed reciprocity can be fatal in more extreme cases.

For instance, during elections for a new mayor, the obligation of reciprocity is crucial. If the mayor fails to return to the community what the community gave to him, he could lose his rank and injure his reputation. During elections or any social occasion, people have to show that regardless of their wealth, they are capable of connecting with less or equally fortunate people by giving them tamales. Besides demonstrating good financial values, the custom of reciprocity in Amberes encourages members of all classes to appreciate that everyone can be generous to some extent, regardless of revenue.

Tamales are a way for Guatemalans to stick with their people and their homeland, as they are a symbol of Guatemalan traditions and part of the Guatemalan identity. For almost every event, birthday, and holiday, tamales are made. I love eating tamales because it is a moment I cherish with my family. It is a moment when I can connect with them by sharing stories and memories as we eat our traditional dish. The traditions and rituals regarding tamales have been around for many generations, creating this transcendent sense of belonging in between Guatemalans. This feeling applies to Guatemalan Canadians too. My Guatemalan friend enjoys eating tamales during Christmas because, although she celebrates in Canada, it makes her feel closer to her homeland. It is comforting to eat what our people eat. Tamales are an important symbol of Guatemalan society. When I eat them, I am reminded that I am proud to be part of that culture.



SHINY HUNGRY PEOPLE

Photographs by Lysette Umwali

Captured in the following pages are people eating and drinking together. Simply put, this shoot is about the joy of getting friends and strangers into the same space. Brushing arms, chinning to the health of one another, sharing a drink, eating with our fingers. The things that make us want to be among others, in this moment when it is possible again.













HOW TO EAT and Drink Like a Moustached MAN of the 1860s

by Holly Ferron

Illustration by James Collier

With every passing month of November, you may notice that countless men begin to appear with moustaches. The annual practice of “Movember” was developed by the Movember Foundation in 2003 and involves growing out one’s moustache or beard in support of men’s health issues, such as testicular cancer, prostate cancer and male suicide. This year you may have participated in it yourself, and if so, you might be wondering why it has become a cultural phenomenon and how men of the past have been able to upkeep their righteous mustachios—especially when it comes to eating and drinking.

Growing out facial hair might be easy for some, but keeping it maintained is key to a perfect moustache. According to “hairstorian” Sharon Twickler, from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, moustaches were a necessary display of masculine identity and physical vigour in Europe and North America. Men commonly carried moustache combs and wax to keep their whiskers in an effortless-looking curl.

Among moustache etiquette manuals, many patented inventions were created, like the moustache spoon and moustache cup, in order to prevent the embarrassment of a moustache full of food. You see, along with maintaining a luscious moustache with wax came the problem of drinking hot liquids. As one was sipping his coffee, the heat would begin to melt the wax, and his moustache would begin to droop. Then the moustache could become drenched in coffee! This was just preposterous. Imagine, sipping soup on a crisp winter afternoon, only to find your moustache dripping with clam chowder!

The moustache mug provided a solution. It is just like a regular mug, except it includes a bridge over the center to protect the stache from coffee stains. Similarly, the moustache spoon also had a bridge over the center to prevent any spillage. Now, you might be wondering how these men protected themselves from the worst moustache menace of all: crumbs.

Nobody wants to be unwittingly stashing their food for later by having a moustache full of crumbs. This was quite uncivilized for gentlemen of the 1860s. The solution to this problem was the moustache guard, a plate that attached to and covered the moustache, allowing men to eat their sandwiches without requiring a napkin.

Although all of these inventions seemed to be quite useful, I cannot imagine that having a moustache guard strapped to your face would be very comfortable. Why was it so important, then, for men to keep their upper lip foliage in such pristine condition?

Moustaches were on the rise in the 1860s because they were a mark of unity and authority for men. With the Industrial Revolution and the Civil War, men in America generally felt more masculine and conformist with whiskers—any man of any class could grow upper lip hair. As stated by Susan Walton, the same goes for Victorian men who grew moustaches in solidarity for men fighting in the Crimean War. However, the more groomed and luscious the stache was, the more masculine the man appeared.

This popularity lasted until the early 1900s, when the younger generation decided staches were not cool anymore (No one wants to look like their father!). Since then, moustaches have come in and out of popularity until today's modern revival of the stache for Movember. So, why not rock the stache like a gentleman of the 1860s!

Whether you sported the handlebar, the Dali, or the imperial stache this November, hopefully you remembered to always carry a moustache comb and avoid the dreaded soup stache at all costs. If you didn't, I sincerely hope that you do next year (although you can have a moustache in any month of the year, if you so fancy)!

A KONKAN COLLECTION OF HOLIDAY RECIPES

by Viva Noronha

Illustrations by Kelly Xiang

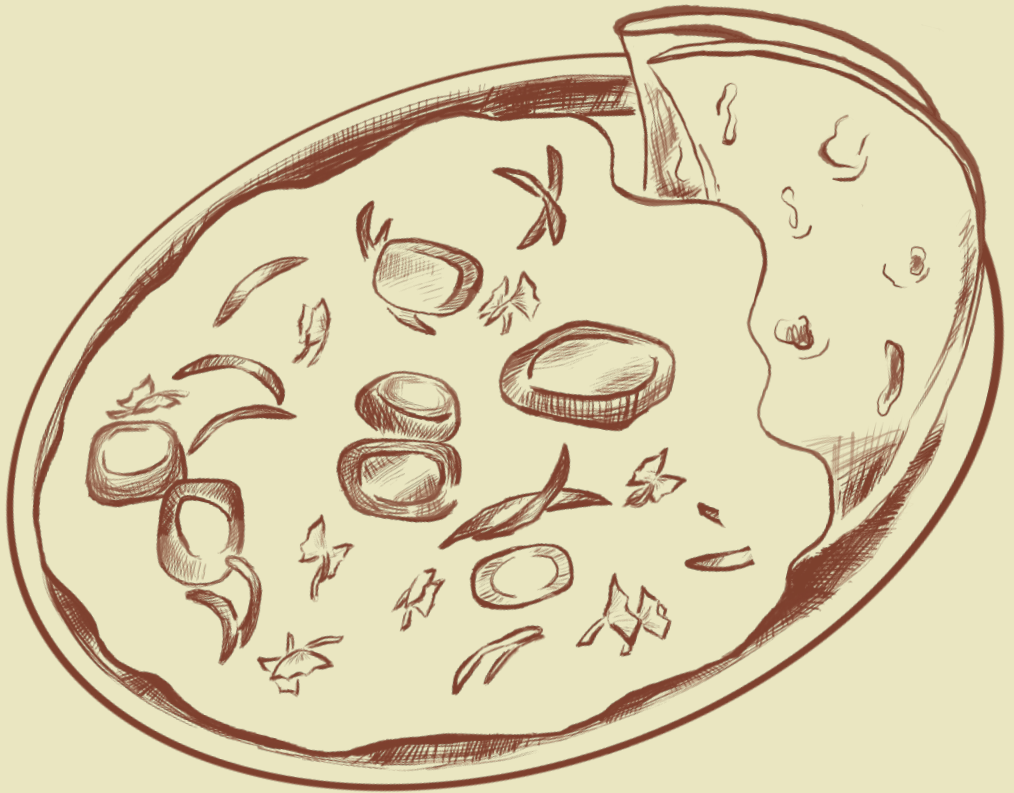
The following collection of recipes has been created, collated, and adapted from grandmother, to mother, to daughter. Although the current and two previous generations of my family have grown up outside of the western, Konkani region of India, characterized by its luscious, rolling landscape, this is from where my family originates, specifically the coastal state of Goa. This identity is borne with pride, whether by unwavering expression of devout Catholic faith or by unyielding consumption of hearty Goan dishes, both imported by Portuguese colonial legacy and practiced extensively on holidays like Christmas and Easter. While my skin bears the same hue as my fellow Goans soaking in the sun on beach shacks, and my last name bears Portuguese influence, as an Indian who has never resided in India, let alone Goa, I often find myself struggling to find a sense of meaning in cultural connection. Since my family's traditions don't overlap with those celebrated popularly by Indians all over the world, such as Diwali or Holi, which find their roots mostly in Hinduism, it is difficult to locate community outside of close family circles.

This circumstance has cultivated in me a unique cultural perspective, one governed majorly by the draw of food and cuisine, as that is when I feel most in touch with the place I come from. Despite it having been almost 10 years since my last visit back home, every bite of curry scented with coconut transports me back to the pristine beaches of Panjim accessorized with swaying coconut palms, and every burst of spicy, porky oil reminds me of 2 a.m. runs to local vendors for *choris pao*. The dishes I am sharing with you I have sacrilegiously dubbed the "Holy Trinity of the Holiday Table." The weak-in-the-knees sensation upon first bite is second only to the generosity of love and spirit felt by those enjoying the dishes together. The recipes heavily feature the use of chilis, an ingredient that traversed many seas, from the Americas to Portugal to eventually end up as a mainstay in Indian cuisine. Each dish invokes a sense of kinship, as my family throws praises and compliments to the chefs, our matriarchs, who beam at us while passing around an infinite conveyor belt of side dishes. These include rice, *sannas* (steamed rice and coconut cakes), and simple vegetable preparations to complement the audacious flavours of the Holy Trinity.

Dried chilis and curry leaves can be found at New Market Meghna, 1605 St Laurent Blvd.

KORI ROTTI CURRY

The first dish is called Kori Rotti Curry, hailing from the Karnatak city of Mangalore, home to a large number of people that fled Goa upon Portuguese colonization. Kori, meaning “chicken” in the Tulu language, and *rotti*, meaning “rice crisp,” feature succulent, bone-in chicken pieces stewed in a spiced coconut curry and soaked up by thin, crunchy rice wafers. The most salient aspect of the curry is the gentle dry roasting of the ingredients for the curry paste, making sure not to burn them. While laborious, the slow heating gradually releases the complex oils and aromas of the spices, which elevate the curry by imparting an earthy flavour. *Rotti*, which is near impossible to find here in North America, can be easily substituted with rice or bread to soak up the curry.



Serves 4–6

1 kg chicken, broken down into 22 pieces (you can ask your butcher to do this)
2 tbsps ghee/clarified butter
3 medium red onions, sliced
1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
1/2 inch turmeric root, or 3/4 tsp turmeric powder
1 tbsp coriander seeds
1 tsp peppercorns
1/2 tsp fenugreek seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 clove garlic
10–15 dried Kashmiri chilis
2 tps tamarind paste
3/4 cup lite coconut milk
1/2 cup full-fat coconut milk
Salt, to taste
Coriander (optional)

1. In a large skillet with high sides set over medium–low heat, sauté 1 sliced onion, the shredded coconut, and the turmeric root in 1 tablespoon of ghee, being careful to not brown the onions.
2. In a separate, small skillet set over medium heat, dry roast the coriander seeds, peppercorns, and fenugreek seeds, lowering heat if necessary, until spices develop a light brown colour and become aromatic. Next, add the cumin seeds and whole garlic clove (the cumin and garlic will brown more quickly). Lastly, add the Kashmiri chilis, being careful to not burn them.
3. Prepare the curry paste by adding all the above ingredients (the dry roasted spices and the cooked onion mixture), plus the tamarind paste, to a blender. Grind into a fine paste, adding water minimally as needed.
4. Add the ground curry paste and lite coconut milk to a medium saucepan and slowly bring to a simmer. As bubbles appear, add the chicken pieces, one sliced onion, and salt to taste.
5. Simmer over medium–low heat until all chicken pieces are cooked through, for about 20–30 minutes, stirring regularly. Add the full-fat coconut milk, and slowly bring to a very gentle boil before turning off the heat (the coconut milk will curdle if the curry is boiled vigorously).
6. In the remaining tablespoon of ghee, fry one sliced onion in a skillet set over medium–high heat until crispy. Garnish curry with fried onions and coriander. Serve with *rotti*, rice, or bread.

SORPOTEL



I take particular delight in sharing this next recipe for Sorpotel. This tangy and spicy pork stew was first invented by African slaves in Brazil to make the pork innards they were given as food more palatable. Given the accessibility and popularity of swine, the hearty dish was quickly exported to Goa by way of Portuguese colonizers. Goans substituted delicious toddy vinegar produced from the sap of coconut palms for the traditional wine, and reinvigorated the flavours with an indulgent amount of Indian spices. Given the highly localized accessibility to toddy vinegar, we will ignore our woes of unlocked flavour potential (toddy vinegar bears a more mellow tang than apple cider vinegar, with undertones of sweetness and a subtle natural pungency), and use white vinegar instead. In a similar vein as the previous recipe, Sorpotel includes raw ingredients and whole spices that are ground into a curry paste; however, we grind the ingredients using vinegar as a diluter instead of water. This is what lends the dish its distinct, tangy flavour profile. The techniques required for the dish, such as parboiling and frying the meat in batches, may be tedious, but work pays off in layers of flavour. The deep crimson of the stew never fails to draw gasps when placed on the table, and the bright red colour of our holiday decorations reflects the vitality of its presence on the dinner table.

Serves 4-6

1kg boneless pork shoulder
1-2 tbsps neutral oil
2 medium red onions, sliced
Salt, to taste

Curry Paste:

2-3 dried green chilis
10-15 dried Kashmiri chilis
1½ inch cinnamon stick
6 cloves garlic
10 peppercorns
1 tsp cumin seeds
1½ tsp turmeric powder
1½ inch ginger
6 garlic cloves
2 tsps tamarind paste
2-6 tsps white vinegar

1. Rinse the pork shoulder in water to remove any blood, and pat dry. Cut it in half or in quarters to fit snugly into a large pot. Cover the pieces entirely with water, sprinkle with salt, and boil for about 30 minutes, or until tender, but not fully cooked through. Skim the surface occasionally to remove any scum. Remove the meat and cut it into 1-2 cm cubes. Set aside the stock for later.
2. Add all the ingredients listed under curry paste to a blender and grind until smooth, starting with 2 tablespoons of vinegar and adding more as needed.
3. In a large skillet set over medium-high heat, brown the cubed pork in 1 tablespoon of oil until golden brown in colour. Work in batches to avoid crowding the skillet, and add oil as needed. Remove pork and set aside.
4. In the same skillet set over medium heat, sauté the sliced onions until translucent. Add in the ground curry paste and fry for a few minutes.
5. Add in the pork and the reserved stock until it just covers the meat. Simmer gently over medium-low heat for about 20-30 minutes, or until thickened slightly. More vinegar can be added at this point, according to taste. Enjoy with *sannas*, rice, or bread.

BENDE SUNGTA KODI

This last dish pays homage to the vibrant diversity of Goa's marine life that thrives in the coastal waters of the Arabian Sea. Bende Sungta Kodi, as it is called in Konkani, comprises juicy prawns and okra cooked in a creamy coconut curry. It is a simple dish but always a crowd pleaser. Around the holidays, it is a classic recipe that makes its way onto the menu, not because of its show stopping qualities, but because someone has pulled my mum aside and begged to have it as an option. It is the one dish that evokes the most holiday nostalgia in me, as I am reminded of how my mum loves to crunch the prawn shells with her teeth to extract the most flavour, and how my dad fills up a dish with just the curry to slurp on. My holiday traditions have been molded to reflect my family's insistence on the importance of food, but more significantly, the importance of fellowship, togetherness, and a good laugh. These are values that I hold close to my heart and hope to keep alive and pass on one day, such as through these recipes.

Serves 2-4

250 grams prawns or shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 tbsps coconut oil
10 pieces okra, chopped into 1 inch pieces
1 cup full-fat coconut milk
1/2 inch ginger, minced
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 large tomato, chopped
Salt, to taste
8-10 curry leaves (optional)

Curry Paste:

4-8 dried Kashmiri chilis
1/2 cup shredded coconut
4-6 garlic cloves
1/4 tsp whole peppercorns
1 tbsp coriander seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp tamarind paste

1. Grind the ingredients listed under curry paste using a blender, adding water as needed.
2. Heat the coconut oil in a medium saucepan set over medium heat. Add the ginger and onion, and cook until translucent. Add the tomato, and cook for 5 minutes, or until it mashes easily.
3. Add the curry paste to the pan, and salt to taste. Bring to a boil.
4. Add in the coconut milk, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer for 10-15 minutes, until the colour deepens slightly.
5. Add in the prawns and okra, and continue to simmer until they are cooked through. The okra should still be firm.
6. Sprinkle the curry leaves over the dish, and serve with rice.



What Kind of Holiday Dinner Party Host Are You?

by Ariyana Dutt, Evelyne Eng, Bridget O'Brien, and Viva Noronha
Illustrations by Kelly Xiang

1

How many plates are you willing to clean?

- a. 3-5, including my own.
- b. BYOP, potluck style.
- c. That's what the dishwasher's for—I'm having at least 10 people over!
- d. I don't provide labour for others. I'm using paper plates.



2

Your checking account allows for

- a. Costco frozen turkey.
- b. One bottle of wine and a side.
- c. A locally-sourced, organic charcuterie board with nut cheese.
- d. I don't have a bank account. I don't want the government monitoring me.



3

How picky are your party people?

- a. We've got some children of God(s), and therefore, some serious restrictions.
- b. There's an allergy, a part-time pescatarian, and an intermittent faster.
- c. A good number of my gang are vegetarians/vegans.
- d. I don't know. I'm not a picky eater, and I won't make adjustments if you are.



4

When it comes to a holiday menu, your ideology is

- a. I need my turkey front-and-center.
- b. I'm down to try a twist on turkey and a simple side.
- c. I'm open to a variety of dishes.
- d. If you don't want turkey-flavored foam, gravy jelly, and dehydrated cranberry dust, you're not invited.



5

In terms of dinner parties, what is your idea of a good time?

- a. Being in bed by 10:00.
- b. A lively game of charades.
- c. The food is the good time.
- d. Chasing the turkey with tequila.



6

What vibe are you trying to create?

- a. Good ol' Canadian jam.
- b. Classy, candlelit ambience.
- c. Depends on what the smallest, most local business has in season.
- d. Much rests on whether or not my favorite punk band will be available.



Conservative

If you answered mostly A, you are conservative when it comes to throwing dinner parties. Keep your guest list exclusive and assign everyone a dish to bring to mitigate the control freak in you. You'll take care of the Butterball turkey. Be mindful of any dietary restrictions, but allow the main responsibility to fall on the guests; if they have specific needs, inform them that they should probably bring a backup dish. To avoid the stress of slow-chewers, tell your guests to arrive early, around 5:00, so you have time to bless the meal, have one small glass of Pinot, tidy up the kitchen, and fall asleep to your favorite Canadian sitcom.

Recipes to try: NYT's Simple Roast Turkey and BA's Best Buttermilk Biscuits



Moderate

If you answered mostly B, your dinner party style is "everything in moderation." You're happy when everyone is happy, so a potluck dinner is the way to go. Start a group chat to ensure that everyone is aware of dietary restrictions and that there's a decent balance between sides, mains, and desserts. Spatchocking your turkey will save you time, so you'll be able to equally spread your energy among tasks, including whipping up a side dish, laying out a modest tablecloth, lighting some unscented candles, and planning a few rounds of games.

Recipes to try: Serious Eats' Butterflied Roasted Chicken with Quick Jus and NYT's 5-Spice Roasted Carrots with Toasted Almonds

Liberal

If you answered mostly C, you're fairly liberal about dinner parties. You want everyone to feel included, which means you've got quite a bit of planning to do. You'll want to start at least a couple of days in advance. Hit up your local farmer's market, where you'll be able to talk directly with business owners about the sourcing and quality of their products. There, you can pick up handmade gifts or flowers, as well as fine charcuterie and fresh produce for all the plant-based dishes you'll be making.

Recipes to try: David Lebovitz's Cranberry Shrub Cocktail and NYT's Vegetarian Mushroom Wellington

Anarchist

If you answered mostly D, you're a straight-up anarchist. That doesn't mean you won't throw a sick dinner party, where anyone down for a crazy night is welcome. As you take their coats, hand every guest an ibuprofen and a liter of water in preparation—whatever happens happens and you're not gonna be held accountable. One thing you can guarantee is the Michelin starred (but not Michelin starred because the Michelin Guide is hierarchical and elitist) dinner that you'll be serving out of your favorite underground cookbook. Get creative, plan ahead, and stock your liquor cabinet. Dress code is punk rock, and consider providing body pads for moshers.

Recipes to try: Tastemade's Clear Pumpkin Pie and Food52's How to Deep Fry a Turkey



